

Military, Law, and more ...

University of Memphis and Ducks Unlimited partner on conservation certification course

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — A partnership between the University of Memphis and Ducks Unlimited has created a new course at the UofM that gives students the opportunity to earn an Ecology Conservation and Management Certification while also gaining course credits toward graduation. The UofM is the only public school in the region to offer a course that includes the certification, which is developed and endorsed by Ducks Unlimited.

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The class — titled Ecology Conservation & Management — is taught by Drs. Jennifer Mandel and Shawn Brown for the first time this spring. Mandel serves as director of the Institute for Agricultural and Conservation Research and Education (ACRE) at the UofM and Brown as associate director. “The Ducks Unlimited Ecology Conservation and Management Certification is a powerful tool that teaches students how conservation benefits wildlife and people alike,” said Mark Horobetz, Ducks Unlimited manager of national R3 programs. “Not only do they gain valuable knowledge, but the certification



Ducks Unlimited CEO Adam Putnam speaks to University of Memphis students enrolled in the Spring 2024 Ecology Conservation & Management course. (Photo by Matt Smith, University of Memphis)

gives them a competitive edge over other candidates once they start their careers after graduation. We thank the University of Memphis for investing in their students and the natural resources industry.” The UofM is one of seven schools in the country partnering with Ducks Unlimited on the certification, including Louisiana State University, Vincennes University, Reedley College, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, University of Mount Olive and Union University. “Ducks Unlimited is one of the largest organizations working to conserve, restore and manage wetland habitats in the world and

they are headquartered right here in Memphis,” said Brown, an associate professor in the Department of Biological Sciences. “Through their efforts, countless acres of ecologically important wetlands have been protected. We hope that this will be the start of a great partnership that may lead to further educational and job opportunities for our students.” The University celebrated the establishment of the course during its first day of class on Jan. 22, which was attended by UofM President Bill Hardgrave and Ducks Unlimited CEO Adam Putnam. “We’re at a pivotal moment —

our growing population and increasing demand for resources really do call for innovative solutions,” Mandel said. “Our students, ACRE and the University are committed to leading these conversations and developing solutions.” The course will provide students with training and expertise they can use when applying for jobs. Led by UofM biologists, it provides a unique perspective and knowledge of how environments function, as well as how to better conserve and manage them. Trips are planned for fieldwork opportunities, including to the Wolf River Conservancy. Since its an-

nouncement, the course has generated enthusiasm and is full for the spring semester with 25 students enrolled. “We are very excited that this course has garnered a lot of interest,” Brown said. “This is important because it shows that there is demand for courses addressing real-world problems from our students. Often, when a new course is developed, it takes a few cycles to develop this much demand. We especially are excited about the interest not only by biology majors but students across the University of Memphis.”

U.S. Senators introduce Veterans Health Care Freedom Act

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Representative Andy Biggs (R-Ariz.).

VETERANS HEALTH CARE FREEDOM ACT

Specifically, the Veterans Health Care Freedom Act would:

- Create a three-year pilot program within the VA Center for Innovation Care and Payment to improve veterans’ access to health care in the free market;

- Require that the pilot program be carried out in at least four Veteran Integrated Service Networks (VISN);

- Improve access to free market health care by allowing veterans to access primary, specialty, and mental health care outside of their corresponding VISN and at non-VA facilities;

- Require the VA to give veterans information about eligibility, cost sharing, treatments, and providers so that they can make informed decisions with respect to selection of primary and specialty care providers and other available treatments;

- Make the pilot program permanent nationwide four years after enactment of the Veterans Health Care Freedom Act;

- Require the VA to submit reports to House and Senate Veterans’ Affairs Committees on the implementation and results of the pilot program, as well as the final design; and

- Fund the pilot program using appropriations otherwise made available to the Veterans Health Administration.

NRA endorses Doug Burgum’s nomination for Sec. of the Dept. of Interior ... from sports page 1

growth, conservation, and wise use of our renewable wildlife resources. The federal lands managed by the Department of the Interior are crucial to this mission.

“On behalf of the millions of NRA members across the country, I am proud to offer NRA’s support of Governor Burgum’s nomination as Secretary of the Department of the Interior,” said John Commerford, Executive Director of the NRA Institute for Legislative Action (NRA-ILA). “As Governor, Burgum championed policies to preserve North Dakota’s hunting heritage for current and future generations. We are confident that Governor

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Burgum will effectively manage our federal public lands and therefore strongly endorse his nomination. We urge the U.S. Senate to act swiftly and confirm President Trump’s nomination of Doug Burgum.”

Throughout his career in public service, Governor Burgum has demonstrated a profound commitment to the Second Amendment rights of law-abiding Americans and a deep respect for our hunting heritage. As Governor, Burgum signed several NRA-sponsored pieces of legislation into law.

Upon entering office, he signed a bill to make North Dakota the

12th state to enact Constitutional Carry. Burgum also signed the state’s “Stand Your Ground” law, expanded opportunities to lawfully carry, and declared North Dakota as a “Second Amendment Sanctuary State.” Most recently, he signed legislation to protect the privacy rights of North Dakotans by prohibiting credit card issuers from surveilling lawful purchases.

Earlier this week, Mr. Commerford delivered a letter to Senate Majority Leader John Thune (R-SD) and Senate Minority Leader Charles E. Schumer (D-NY) indicating NRA’s support of Governor Burgum’s nomination.

Haggerty grabs 4th AAC Player of Week honor

IRVING, Texas – University of Memphis guard PJ Haggerty has been named the American Athletic Conference Player of the Week, the league office announced Monday.

It’s the fourth player of the week honor for Haggerty this season, and his seventh weekly award overall on the year.

Haggerty led the No. 24 Tigers to two massive wins at home this week, defeating Wichita State (61-53) on Thursday and UAB (100-77) on Sunday.

The redshirt sophomore averaged 22.5 points, 6.5 assists, 5.5 rebounds and 3.5 steals in 35.3 minutes per game. He shot 63.0

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Watch for  
The Mid-South Tribune’s  
30th  
Annual Black History  
Month Special Edition  
in February 2025.

Gov. Sanders announces \$66.5 million in Arkansas water funding

LITTLE ROCK, Ark. — Governor Sarah Huckabee Sanders has announced an additional \$66.5 million in financial assistance for water and wastewater projects for eight entities. The projects serve more than 60,594 Arkansans in eight counties. The Arkansas Natural Resources Commission approved this funding on January 15, 2025.

“Today’s announcement continues my administration’s commitment to making sure every Arkansas community has access to safe drinking water,” said Governor Sanders. “Thank you to the agency staff and local officials who are working in close partnership to develop sustainable solutions to water infrastructure in all four corners of our state.”

“Reliable water and wastewater infrastructure is vital to both the quality of life for every Arkansan and the strength of our communities,” said Arkansas Secretary of Agriculture Wes Ward. “Governor Sanders’ continued

leadership on water issues ensures that Arkansas is well-positioned for future success.”

Under Governor Sanders’ leadership, the State of Arkansas has administered more than \$2.8 billion for water development projects in all 75 counties using state and federal funds.

The recipients are listed below:  
•**Bentonville** in Benton County is receiving a \$55,000,000 loan from the Clean Water State Revolving Fund. The project serves a current customer base of 54,164. These funds will be used for water resource recovery facility improvements.  
• **Eureka Springs** in Carroll County is receiving two loans: a \$6,180,000 loan from the Water, Sewer, and Solid Waste Fund and a \$100,000 emergency loan from the Water Development Fund. The projects serve a current customer base of 1,945. These funds will be used for wastewater treatment plant improvements.  
•**Gravel Ridge Sewer Improve-**

**ment District 213 in Pulaski County** is receiving a \$2,512,632 loan from the General Obligation Bond Fund. The project serves a current customer base of 1,489. These funds will be used for a sewer collection rehabilitation.  
•**Horsebend Property Owners Association in Washington County** is receiving a \$154,500 loan from the Water, Sewer, and Solid Waste Fund. The project serves a current customer base of 51. These funds will be used for a wastewater treatment plant rehabilitation.  
•**Mount Ida** in Montgomery County is receiving a \$586,226 loan from the General Obligation Bond Fund. The project serves a current customer base of 600. These funds will be used for a sewer plant rehabilitation.  
•**North Crossett Utilities in Ashley County** is receiving two loans: a \$848,916 loan from the General Obligation Bond Fund and a \$396,288 loan from the Water, Sewer, and Solid Waste Fund. The projects serve a current customer base of 1,251.

These funds will be used for meter upgrades and a sewer lift station.

•Ola in Yell County is receiving a \$343,477 loan from the Water Development Fund. The project

serves a current customer base of 571. These funds will be used for a water main replacement and pump station upgrade.

•Yellville in Marion County is receiving a \$384,190 loan from the

Water, Sewer, and Solid Waste Fund. The project serves a current customer base of 523. These funds will be used for wastewater collection and treatment improvements.

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